Letters on Evangelism

EDWIN H. HUGHES

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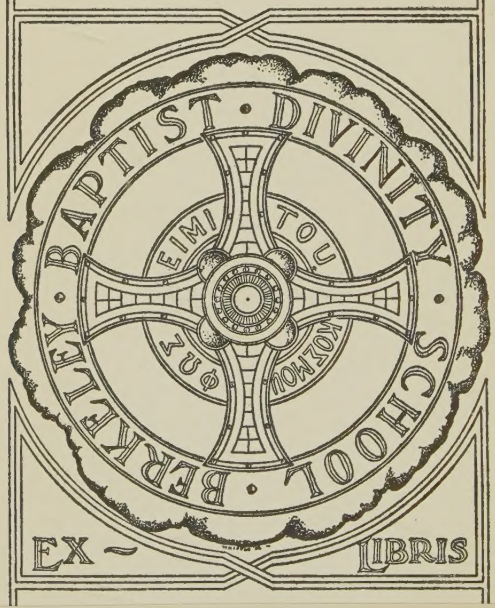

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Letters on Evangelism

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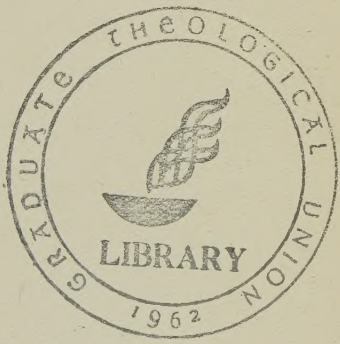
By

EDWIN HOLT HUGHES

President of De Pauw University,
Greencastle, Ind.



CINCINNATI: JENNINGS AND GRAHAM
NEW YORK: EATON AND MAINS

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BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL

Dedication

To My Father,

Thomas Bayless Hughes

And My Brother,

Matthew Simpson Hughes

To the One
As a Representative for Fifty Years
of the Effective Evangelism
of his Generation;

To the Other
As a Worthy Successor in the Appeal
of the Changing Order;

To Both
As Preachers of the Eternal Gospel

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FORE-LETTER.

My Dear Young Friend:

Several times in the recent months you have attended conventions at which I had the privilege of speaking on Evangelism. Shortly afterward you wrote me letters asking various questions as to how you should approach the friends for whose deepest and largest good your heart yearned. Those letters I answered, giving such directions as my judgment and experience warranted. In each letter you have said to me that you longed to be a true teller of the good news, but that you did not know either how to fit the Gospel trumpet to your lips or how to decide when the other soul would probably give heed to your poor notes.

You have twice assured me that my advice helped you; even though it was meager and incomplete and was sifted to you through a stenog-

rapher. I am persuaded that you are not lonely in your perplexity and desire. If you but knew it, you are only one of hundreds of thousands who have the evangelistic spirit but who lack confidence in its expression and use. And, since whatever instruction I have tried to give you hitherto has been in the form of letters, I have thought that perhaps I might best come to you again in that same form. Hence I am now writing you some "Letters on Evangelism."

The plan has this advantage: It will tend to keep what I would say to you very direct and personal. When a man writes about winning souls for the Great Kingdom, he should not consider principally his rēpute as an exact scholar or a fine writer. I recall that in some of Paul's letters the parentheses sound like awkward interruptions and that sometimes the noun and the verb are scarcely within reach of each other. But there is no pedantry in Paul's letters; they are warm with individuality; they throb forth to their great purpose. I would that what I am writing to you might have something of this quality.

Permit me to remind you that there are certain points of comparison between religious thinking and religious working. In our time some views are changing, and men say the period is one of theological transition. It is even more true that methods of work are changing, and that the period is one of evangelistic transition. If you do not think of God just as your grandfather did, be not discouraged so long as you think of Him lovingly. If you do not work for God just as your grandfather did, if you can not clap your hands and exhort, mixing hallelujahs with invitations, be not dismayed so long as you do work for God faithfully. Your grandfather was doubtless true to his own nature and time; you should be true to yours. God wants those who serve Him rather than those who mimic their ancestors.

And may I ask you not to expect too much from these letters? The apprentice gets skill from hearing and seeing *plus doing*. The overseer starts the apprentice; but the apprentice must work his proficiency out of experience. So you will become an evangelist not by another's

words but by your own deeds. I would even say to you, my young friend, that these letters will injure your soul if you read them, approve their suggestions, feel their truths, and then do not force yourself on from discipleship to apostleship. You will make blunders, of course. You will deal with the changeful and subtle material of human souls. Evangelism is the finest art of earth, and an art is won by practice. If it takes months to learn a trade, you need not wonder that it requires long patience to fashion souls into the glorious image of Christ. Therefore, I say, do not expect too much of these imperfect suggestions. I can only *start* you on the road toward that strange point where the soul meets God. To bring about one such meeting is to become a priest and a king.

I am writing these letters to you *by request.* The General Secretary of the Epworth League and his co-workers have said that it was my duty to send you this message. If it results in the building of inconspicuous pulpits where you and others may in your way preach the truth of Christ, I shall be happier. But I can not sign

myself as anything more than an inefficient fellow-worker in that Gospel which is worthy of our best, but which so often receives only our poorest, service. Cordially,

EDWIN H. HUGHES.

DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind.,
October 25, 1906.

Letters on Evangelism.

LETTER I.

Evangelism and Confession.

My Dear Young Friend:

One of your inquiries seems to imply that you have a doubt as to whether every one who confesses Christ is called to be an evangelist. Notwithstanding the fact that we are all prone to evade a duty by claiming that it belongs to others who are specially chosen, I must still presume that your doubt is a genuine one, and that you would not willingly befog your own conscience. Whatever may be your theory of the matter, it may be that your practice has been to delegate the work of evangelism to your pastor and a very few of the gifted elect.

But, if you will think a moment, I am sure

you will see and feel that every Christian is called to be an evangelist. Mind you, I do not prescribe any special form of evangelism; I contend only that he who really gets the Gospel is under obligation to give the Gospel. In the New Testament the twelve went on Gospel journeys, and so did the seventy. Peter preached, and so did the Gadarene demoniac whom Jesus would not allow to enter public service. Read that story in the first Chapter of John which recites the beginning of Christian evangelism. The Baptist finds Jesus and says, "Behold." Andrew finds Jesus and says to Simon, "We have found the Messias." Philip finds Jesus and says to Nathaniel, "Come and see." Confession and evangelism are here so near together that it is hard to tell where the one joins the other.

And is not this what we would expect? If the Gospel is anything, it is grandly and terribly much. If it is true at all, it is the best news the world ever heard. It is thus inconceivable that any one should hear and believe it and then fail to tell it forth. Among physicians there is a strict code which forbids secret remedies. The

meaning is that a doctor, finding a cure for any disease, must at once give to other doctors the benefit of his knowledge so that it may come straightway to the help of the world. This is a sane and generous provision. The Christian life is not less exacting. The lepers who crouched without the gate of Samaria and muttered: "This is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace," were not so fearful or neglectful as those who confess that Jesus is the world's hope, and still do not find their confession transformed into some sort of an invitation.

You will quickly see, my young friend, how easy it would be to bear upon this point to your great discomfort. In truth you have heard, as I have heard, the strong statement that the Gospel, if truly received, will force its way to the lips and that the Christian, in the necessity of the case, will preach Christ. This theory needs to be stated charitably. It does not always take into account natural timidity, or the sense of personal unworthiness, or the fear of bungling the finest work on earth. If we would say that every truly converted soul

feels the evangelistic impulse, even though that soul may not have found a form of expression, we would speak well. Hence these letters are written in recognition of the fact that many long to be evangelists and know not how, and in furtherance of the inspiration and courage and skill that are necessary to an evangelistic life. And this special letter will do its work if it makes you feel that you, being a confessor, are under covenant to be a proclaimer and an inviter. My faith in you leads me to the confidence that, since you profess to have found life, you wait only for words to make the secret known,—for ways in which the blessed cure may be applied by your hands to other stricken souls. Only let me beseech you that you wait not too long; for "the road of Bye-and-Bye leads to the town of Never." Sincerely, E. H. H.

LETTER II.

Evangelism and Experience.

My Dear Young Friend:

Your reply makes me feel that my last word to you did not reach the center of your difficulty. You tell me that you see no way of avoiding the conclusion that confession should be followed by evangelism, but that your trouble lies in a doubt as to whether your confession of Christ is based upon an experience of Christ so convincing and adequate as to give your words sincerity and effect. Perhaps, then, I can help you somewhat by writing you frankly about "religious experience" and its relation to evangelism.

Your letter leads me to suspect that you are in the company of scores of young people who have given me their confidence and who feel in

real doubt about their own spiritual standing. Now when a young person is concerned about his spiritual standing I must know that he has some experience. It may be but an experience of conviction; yet is not that an experience? Does not his concern show desire; and is not that an experience? Does it not show a spirit of faith and hope; and is not this an experience? When you come to me with your serious inquiry I perceive immediately that you have an experience, and that you want more and better. This is very good.

I feel sympathetic toward your difficulty because you wish to keep your genuineness. Sometimes I think that genuineness is God's first law. At any rate, I am quite sure that He has small chance with us until we are real. It is easy for me to understand how you hesitate to invite others to a life that involves an experience until you have gained the experience for yourself. For years I walked your way of doubt until I found the path which I shall now point out to you.

Does not your difficulty, after all, lie here: In a search for a special and preconceived experi-

ence rather than for *an experience?* St. Paul's conversion was dramatic, a kind of forceful seizure by a stern hand. But it is the only such experience in the New Testament. There is one dramatic conversion,—St. Paul's! There is one dramatic revival,—Pentecost! Yet our longing for signs and wonders has led us to make these two events typical. Consequently, Churches try to reproduce Pentecost, while individuals attempt to secure a conversion with spectacular outer setting. Those of us who were reared in a certain religious environment wanted to be struck by spiritual electricity; a conversion unaccompanied by very thrilling thrills was not up to type or standard. And how much doubt we have suffered on this account? How many times have we felt so uncertain of our experience that we questioned our right to speak to any one of the life in Christ? This is very bad.

I am convinced that the proportion of dramatic conversions is just about what we would expect if we studied the New Testament for suggestion. Paul was brought in after this fashion; but what was dramatic in the conversion of the

Twelve Apostles? The simple fact is, that in our day, as in the day of the early Church, the Pauline type of experience is exceptional. I fear, too, that it is not complimentary to its subjects. We should be glad if God led us to Himself without violence. If Christ won us by the still small voice rather than by the awful persuasion of storm and earthquake, let us be grateful.

Is it not strange how willing men seem to be to lose their individuality in religious matters? One does not study the world long without noting that God has immense respect for individuality. He never makes two leaves just alike, two apples just alike, two trees just alike, or two sky-scenes just alike. Nor has He ever made two human faces just alike. There may be twins of perplexing resemblance, but there are no perfect doubles in the world. The great Fashioner never exactly repeats His work. There are no two minds that are precisely alike. Given the same subject to discuss, they will proceed differently, and no sentence in one's treatment will have its duplicate in the other's treatment. Evi-

dently the good God has an unfailing respect for individuality.

You will readily see what analogy this suggests for religious work. Even as there are no two faces or minds just alike, so there are no two souls that are just alike. We should thus expect that there would be no two experiences that are alike. The Spirit fits experience to the spirit. His ways defy full analysis. Still, if we could have the history of all His dealings, we should surely find that He never moved upon two souls in just the same way. No man has a right to prescribe the form of experience that shall be given him. Indeed, we would all be wise to wipe out our preconceptions. I sometimes wonder if we show a proper respect either for ourselves or for the Spirit when we seek for other people's experiences. The idea that there is any typical experience has been the source of much mischief and the cause of endless doubt. Do not you, my young friend, become its victim. Rejoice truly because God thinks so much of your separateness that He will deal with you in a lonely and personal way.

The goal of every experience is the will. It is true that the way to the will is through the sensibilities; but there are sensibilities that are never expressed in tears. I surmise that in our day many are trying to leap from the intellect to the will. The effort is not a success. We must have the sensibilities touched. Only let us be careful lest we define sensibilities too narrowly. But, leaving out all debate about the steps, the goal of experience is the will. Is your will set toward God and His righteousness? Are you determined to follow Christ? Are you anxious to follow the leadership of the Spirit? If you can say "Yes," you have the experience necessary to evangelism. In your work that experience will grow in tenderness, in strength of evidence, and in persuasion for others. This, to my thought, states the relation of experience to evangelism.

You will perceive that this point has its bearing on him whom you would win to the Master. Do not, I warn you, seek to lead him to any special type of experience. With that you have nothing to do. You can bring a soul to God;

but you must not dictate as to how He shall treat the soul. Nor must you cause the soul to feel that one experience is better than another, if so be that both issue at last in love and consecration. We always blunder when we try to open the petals of the flower with our rude fingers. It is much better to bring the plant to the place of sunshine and shower and to let it express itself without our clumsy interference. Herein is a parable. That God may make plain its meaning for yourself and for the subjects of your prayer and work is the desire of

Yours sincerely, E. H. H.

LETTER III.

Evangelism and Theology.

My Dear Young Friend:

Several months ago you wrote concerning an evangelistic address in which I had openly acknowledged that I saw as yet no satisfactory explanation of a certain theological difficulty. I said to you then that I rejoiced with those who felt that they had solved the problem in hand, but that, for myself and my own work, I was obliged to proceed at times without any final theory. Somehow I can not but feel that there are secrets locked in the mind and heart of God, and that His Son, knowing well the present bounds of our intellectual and spiritual powers, still says quite often, "I have yet very many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now." Please note that the reason for the withheld revelation was in men. It is still so.

I have neither disposition nor time to go over the special difficulty again. Indeed, I still feel that I have no solution to offer you. None the less, I expect to continue to give evangelistic messages. I have thought that your letter may represent a condition so general and important as to deserve a wider treatment. Are we to wait until theology stands sun-clear to our thinking ere we give ourselves to evangelism? Can we conscientiously preach Christ ere we understand and define His Deity? Should we lift up the Cross before we have wrought out a satisfying theory of the Atonement? If you have gone to college, or if your mind has been otherwise stimulated, you are certain to ask these questions.

And the first and most natural answer is that you should act in evangelism as sensibly and practically as you act in other matters. Shall we ride on the cars ere we understand and define the nature of electricity? Shall we hold communion with men ere we can explain how a spirit can live in a body? Shall we refuse the aid of our fellows until we find that bridge of mystery across which the kind will sends its com-

mand to the helping hand? All these questions hint at things which, prior to experience, would be deemed impossible: an invisible fluid pulling visible tons of weight; a non-spatial nature dwelling in flesh; an intangible disposition giving tangible aid. Yet these things are facts, and we invite men to their use as if we comprehended all the mystery of life. In this we do well. It is a dreadful thing to be made helpless either by a theory or by the lack of a theory.

So my advice to you, my friend, is that you confess at once your limitations. Admit that all these big questions are too deep for you. Get such partial answers as you can. Never allow mystery to deceive you into mental laziness. Remember that great scholars have spent their lives in wrestling with theological problems and in the end have come back from an ocean with a cupful of explanation. In their eagerness to find out the truth, as well as in their willingness to cling to faith, when truth proved baffling, they have frequently been our models. In our small ways we should seek for some such balance so that we may be both investigators and believers.

You must not, however, allow any unconverted person to make you feel that the doubts are all your own. If he faces his difficulties manfully, he must have a hard task. The fact is that many problems are common to the believer and the unbeliever. He can not escape, for example, the problem of eternity. Something always was,—either God or matter. So that staggering conception of everlastingness is his as well as yours. He has, too, a problem like unto the problem of omnipresence. How does God work everywhere? Well, how does the law of gravitation work everywhere? I think you can usually feel that the sincere man whom you may seek to win to Christ has some large doubts growing out of his own views of things and some still larger doubts growing out of his restless heart. If the man who believes in God has intellectual misgivings, what must be the experience of the thoughtful man who finds no final Cause of the world and no final goal for the race?

You should consider, too, that theories and doctrines have a right to claim their own his-

tory as evidence. Men often say that we should follow truth, no matter where it leads us. There is no gainsaying this brave word. But does truth ever lead steadily into darkness? Does a real and necessary path end in a cruel bog? This is only to express the conviction of humanity that a so-called truth falls under suspicion when it fails to produce good results. We have a right to ask what has been the fruitage of theories that denied the Deity of our Lord and the redeeming character of the Atonement. There have been movements in the history of the Church, almost from the beginning, that make a fair test. Have they reached men effectively? Have they sent missionaries into dark lands? Have they been able to keep a warm and vital appeal to those most in need of uplift,—to drunkards and harlots and outcasts? Surely we should expect that there would be a saving force in truth. Any doctrine of man's soul or of God's nature that issues in an ineffective work for men is thus open to the most serious questioning.

This brings us forward to face certain great

facts. We may illustrate it by speaking of the Cross. Much has been said about the Atonement. Theologians have written libraries setting forth their various theories. Miley says one thing; Hodge says another; Bushnell says another; and some men say that all the views are partial, and that the complete doctrine of the Cross must include them all. But amid all these theories does not the *fact* of the Atonement stand? Has not the preaching of the Crucified saved men and nations? Does it not save now? Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a conservative in theology. Hugh Price Hughes was a progressive. They worked contemporaneously in London. Their views of the Atonement were different; but they agreed on the great fact. The ministry of them both was blessed with many souls. For myself, I am quite skeptical about the work of any minister who has more of a reputation as a conservative or progressive in thinking than he has as a force in evangelizing; and I am confident that the average lay worker should present the fact of a Christ who loved unto death and whose Cross

in some deep way draws us on to God and puts us at peace with Him. If you feel the glory and power of this fact, my friend, you have the theology of a genuine evangelist. In the fellowship of that faith, I am, Yours sincerely,

E. H. H.

LETTER IV.

Evangelism and Scripture.

My Dear Friend:

You wrote me a while ago concerning the work of your Young People's Society, saying that you knew of no personal worker's handbook which gives any clear and sufficient direction as to the use of the Bible in evangelism. Since then I have thought much of what you said, and have tried to find something to meet the deficiency. I have not found it yet, nor am I at all hopeful that what I am now writing to you will answer the desired end. Some day a man who is both a scholar and an evangelist will give us a full statement of the relation of the Scriptures to evangelism. Until then we must be content with scraps of instruction.

Of course, you will readily see that the subject-matter of your gospel is found in the Bible.

You should, therefore, be familiar with its pages. In an effort to exalt Christ men sometimes say that we are not saved by believing in a Book, but rather by believing in a Person. This sounds spiritual. But I have never been quite sure that Christ would care to be so used as to set the Bible at a disadvantage. While the above statement is perfectly true, after a fashion, it is still better to say that the book is set on high because, properly understood, it leads us to believe on Christ. "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name." (John xx, 31.) So says one of the Gospels. This, then, is the purpose of the Bible. All its paths of thought, history, warning, promise, and instruction lead to one Goal.

But this statement of the case implies that certain sections of the paths may be a little distant from the Goal. The Gospel of Luke is nearer the Lord than is the Song of Solomon. Genesis is introduced with the words, "In the beginning God created;" the Gospel of John starts

with, "In the beginning was the Word." There is similarity, as you will observe; but there is a sense of contrast. Revelation has moved forward. The sentence has come for which all other sentences were a preparation. We are introduced to Christ, the Word, that we might have "right to become the sons of God" in grace and fellowship as well as in heredity. In the one case God is seen making and fashioning materials; in the other He is speaking to the souls of men. If the poet was right when he said,

"'T was great to speak a world from naught;
'T was greater to redeem,"

we stand at the opening of John's Gospel nearer to God's deeper coming.

But you will say that this means that not all parts of the Bible are of equal value as servants of evangelism. This is just what it means. The genealogical tables of the Old Testament would scarcely convict the wayward. The reciting of a most accurate and impressive family-tree leaves much to be desired in the way of moral appeal. The proverbs are sagelike in their wisdom; but

many of them are not fitted for the inquiry-room. The prophet's description of a thunder-storm is dramatic and weird to the highest degree; but it is not likely to awaken the sinner from the sleep of death. Let us be sensible here. The different parts of the Bible are strongest when they are kept within their meaning and purpose. The Scripture in its relation to evangelism reaches its climax when it brings us squarely within hearing of Him who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Have you noticed this, my friend, that the most vigorous and extreme sifting of the Bible seems to leave all the promises and invitations intact? The more conservative critic, who recognizes the progressive character of revelation, and admits that the Book has its human elements, leaves us the tender calls of the Old Testament and believes that he puts a premium on the power of the New Testament. The radical critic, who seems to many of us to place rude and irreverent hands upon the Book of books, and who sometimes goes even so far as to deny the res-

urrection of Christ, has not yet had heart or heartlessness enough to deny the genuineness of our Savior's call at the Great Feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and live," or His words to "the woman with a past," "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." There is something suggestive and convincing in all this. So far as I know, not a single invitation of Christ has been cut from the Bible by the most destructive critic. You and I may well pray that his hand may be kept from the cruel task.

You must not conclude that portions of the Old Testament may not be used in evangelizing. The love that comes to its full revelation in Christ expressed itself in all the years and books. Isaiah i, 18, is as true for America as for Israel, while Isaiah liii, 6, 7, needs no change whatever to be made fit for the Christian dispensation. It is not needful to give a list of evangelistic passages. Indeed, such a list would be injurious to you, my friend, if it kept you from searching

the Scriptures for yourself. Crutches are worse than useless when people have good limbs. Study your Bible, so that its great warnings can pass from you to the sinful, its great promises from you to the penitent, its great invitations from you to the wavering, and its great Light can shine through you until men shall be coaxed in from the land of darkness to the radiant glories of the Eternal City.

Permit me to give you two warnings. The first is this: When we speak solely from the side of the Scriptures, we make much of their power. We quote, "The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." This is a terrible claim, and it holds good when the real Word of God is brought to the sensitive and prepared heart. This strong passage does not overstate what has happened to some of us in those times when God's Word, whether within the Bible or not, found our souls. Still we must consider that it makes much dif-

ference to whom the Word comes. Let us admit that we have heard the Bible quoted when it did not reach us quickly and powerfully; and let us admit likewise, that we have sometimes quoted its most appealing parts to men with but little apparent effect. The Parable of the Sower has its lesson for every evangelist. The seed was good,—all good, but the soil was thin, or stony, or weedy, or exposed to the winged robbers. Many a young Christian has started to work with a Bagster Bible in hand and has recited a passage to a reckless friend only to find that the effect was not like magic. This has sometimes shaken his faith both in himself and in the Bible. Hence my warning is: Do not expect the unprepared and unconvicted soul to answer at once the call of the Book. As the Hottentot must get the message translated into his own crude tongue, so are there deeper preparations necessary ere the Scriptures, with all the matchless power that has wrought out civilizations, can do their full service to the individual heart. The husbandman hath long patience till he receive the early and latter rain. Let us be pa-

tient,—with ourselves, with our work, and with the soul of our love and hope!

And the second warning is this: Refuse to be drawn into an argument. Do not debate about Jonah and the whale. Do not discuss whether Job is history or allegory. Do not launch out into any theory about Melchizedek. Do not get tangled up in the imagery of Daniel or in the mystic numbers of Revelation. *In evangelizing* keep mooted points at a distance. Hold to the great things. Tell men that they must do something with Christ. In later years I have learned to stay by the supreme question. It is not an easy lesson, but the personal evangelist should learn it well. In the last analysis drive home this inquiry, until a man's heart shall ask it insistently, "What then shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" This is the perpetual question of the evangelist because it is the final question for every living soul. That you may learn how to make it real and burning is the earnest wish of

Your friend, E. H. H.

LETTER V.

Evangelism and Naturalness.

My Dear Friend:

You will permit me to address you concerning one matter connected with evangelism about which you have not written me at all, but which seems to me to need some attention. I refer to naturalness of manner and speech. I have sometimes felt that so far as anything superficial can be called essential, plain naturalness is one of the essentials of a successful evangelist. We have both known men who were so simple in their bearing in private and in public that their simplicity made for strength. On the other hand, we have known men who allowed certain affectations to fasten themselves upon them, and who for this reason were reduced in influence.

Let me give you two concrete instances of that I have in mind. Some years ago I met a young

man who was an active member of an Epworth League in the East. I do not think that he was false in the center of his life; yet he had a manufactured voice and a manufactured manner. The first time I saw him I observed this. It was in a religious after-meeting. In speaking to a stranger, he dropped his voice into the depths and gave forth the heaviest "pious tones" that I ever heard. His demeanor was like unto his speech. It was measured, unctuous, unreal. I knew at once that I could never use him in Church work until he had learned the lesson that staginess did not produce results in the Lord's Kingdom, and that an impression of unreality is a poor forerunner for the gospel of truth.

The other instance was that of a mature Christian. He was a man of splendid ability, wide culture, and spiritual earnestness. He stood by his tasks year in and year out, and the decades found him still faithful. I came to know his heart, and it was true. But this man's service as a Christian worker was hindered by an assumed tone and manner. Both had become natural to him,—that is, they had become "second

nature." After months of acquaintance his ways were not trying; yet in the first meetings he would impress you as having a counterfeit exterior. I am sure that his influence was seriously crippled by his unnaturalness. How was a comparative stranger to know that his manner did not tell the truth, and that the assumed bearing had behind it an unassuming spirit? This man's case was hopeless. His ways were fixed. To have told him of his limitation would have hurt his feelings without curing the defects. He was thus virtually condemned to do a limited service, and that among the few that came to know him well.

Now, my friend, I sometimes think that the temptation to unnaturalness is almost natural in religious work. This is a peculiar way to state it; but you will know what I mean. God is so great that the awe of Him may drive our voice to whispers. Christ is so good that the everyday tone may not seem a sufficient tribute. And then there is that translation which calls the third Person in the blessed Trinity the "Holy Ghost." This may suggest a haunting presence

rather than a guiding Friend. We should always keep our reverence. Carelessness has no place in evangelism. On the other hand, we must be careful not to invest our religion with anything like "spookiness." We should not only talk to God as friend talks to friend, but we should also talk about God as friend talks about friend.

The word "natural," as you must have noticed, has several meanings. Sometimes it is used as opposed to artificial; again as opposed to human; again as opposed to unaccustomed; again as opposed to supernatural; and yet again as opposed to spiritual. The King James version of the Bible used it in this last sense, saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, . . . because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." (1 Cor. ii, 14, 15.) This distinction between "natural" and "spiritual" is contained in the Revised Version. We need to be careful in our thinking and working, lest we put a wrong meaning into "natural," and so make the "spiritual" seem unnatural. To be sure, proper discrimination will save from this error,

and this discrimination is what I would urge on you. The word "natural" in the above passage means "sensuous." The "natural man" is he who lets knowledge pour upon him only through the channels of the five senses and who does not open himself to the deeper sources of assurance. The simple truth is that no man is genuinely natural until he lives in his real dwelling-place—the Lord. (Psa. xc.) When the prodigal "came to himself" he came likewise to God. We were made for God, and we are all unnatural and out of our places until we live in the Father's House. If you can make men feel this truth, you have already builded a sure way of approach to their spirits.

I recall now estimates which I heard given of two Christian workers. An irreligious man said of one: "He is very jolly and talks to me about everything except religion." This man meant to pay a compliment; but, since the worker in question had long enjoyed his close acquaintance, he really offered an accusation. Concerning the other worker, a business man said: "He talks to me about religion very much as he talks

to me about other things, and I like him on that account." The contrast here is instructive. The first worker probably felt that religion ought not to be brought into natural and informal conversation; while the second worker felt that Jesus was to be found in the street and field, as well as in the Temple. Do you doubt, my friend, which one of these viewpoints is the more wholesome and persuasive? Do you doubt which one gives the safer and truer conception of our faith?

The fact is that in the work of the gospel a man becomes peculiarly identified with what he seeks to do. Phillips Brooks used to give this definition: "The sermon is truth and man together. It is the truth brought through a man." In a sense a man is the setting of truth. This holds good for private preaching as well as for public preaching. Consequently the truth will take a certain quality *from you*. Have you not noticed how differently the same things sound when they come from different persons? Surely one's spirit is a part of one's message. Just as surely is one's demeanor a part of one's message. We may quickly grant that it is not

the most inward part, but the voice and the manner get all mixed up with what we do. If they are unreal, the truth that we speak seems to catch their impression of unreality. No matter how thoroughly the faith may hold you, the word loses power when it fails in naturalness. The business man with his shrewd judgment and the youth with his keen instinct will detect the thing that is "put on." As you value the strength of your appeal, let it be natural. Learn to speak of Christ with no change of tone save that which brings love out into sincere and spontaneous expression. I have sometimes said that a man ought to talk of religion as if it were food, not medicine. Let your address be such as to make men feel that you are talking about the truest thing in the universe. If your voice trembles, let the tremor be unassumed. If tears brim your eyes, let them come unbidden. He who trifles with these sacred signs of feeling has been caught by the demon of unreality. And the best way to secure genuineness of manner is to live with Christ so constantly and to follow Him so closely that any consideration of His claims upon your-

self and others will put no strain upon your manner, no jar in your voice, and no wrench within your spirit. You will pardon what I have written on this subject; for your observation will convince you of the need of the warning. That you will tell the great story the more effectively because the more naturally is the desire of,

Yours sincerely, E. H. H.

LETTER VI.

Evangelism and Preaching.

My Dear Friend:

I deem it rather strange that you have never asked me any questions as to the relation of preaching to evangelism. Doubtless as you read this first sentence you will say to yourself, "I am not a preacher. Why, then, should I make inquiry about the place of the pulpit in evangelistic work? I will leave that matter to my pastor." So feeling, you have fallen into one of the practical heresies of modern Church effort. It may do good if we think of the case together.

If you were a pastor, I should not write as I now plan to write. It is true that there are certain phases of preaching with which you are not charged. You can not see to it that each sermon gets so related to Christ that at the end

He seems to stand forth as the Word; you can not see to it that the path to the Church's altar (I use the term broadly) is always open; nor can you see to it that the various messages of your minister shall make an atmosphere of appeal and invitation in which it is possible, or even easy, to urge men to decision. And yet, all this being granted, you may have a very distinct and effective relation to evangelistic preaching.

To begin with, the failure to recognize the responsibility of the layman, young or old, for the public service is a cardinal blunder. There is a contrast which impresses me nearly every time I attend a Sunday service,—the contrast between the way in which the minister begins the service and the way in which the layman begins. The minister enters the pulpit, kneels for a moment in prayer, and then arises to conduct the order of singing, Bible-reading, praying, and preaching. The layman enters, does not either kneel or bow in prayer, and thus moves to his part in the worship. Several years ago a young pastor was taken rather sharply to task by a mature layman because he bowed his head rather than came to

his knees on entering the pulpit. The young man replied gently, "When you enter your pew, you do not do either. Why not?" Evidently there was something wrong with this layman's conception of the public service. If a minister is not prepared to *lead* in worship without the uplift of prayer, certainly the layman is not prepared to *follow* in worship without the like uplift. What, my friend, is the reason for public worship? Is it not that there shall be a coalescing of faith, a mingling of trust, and a kind of persuasion wrought from the desires of the many? Bad things become accentuated in crowds; that is why a mob is often more fiendish than an individual would be in dealing with a supposed criminal. In the same manner good things become accentuated in crowds; that is why faith and hope are often so strong in us when we are in the vast congregation. You see the meaning of this, do you not? And do you see the responsibility it implies? You help to make the mood of a meeting; you are a part of its appeal; your spirit presses against every other present spirit. Hence you determine in this way and in your

proportion the strength of its evangelism. Is it your longing that men may be reached in this hour? Did you pray at its opening that some heart should be made ready for the saving word? I think I have seen cases where the evangelistic feeling of the people took possession of a preacher and made his message more direct and forceful. In this rather indirect and mystical way the young members of our Churches could give effect to public evangelism.

But there is a more direct way in which you can give yourself to evangelism as related to preaching. There come seasons in most Churches that seem dry and unfruitful. The pastor may not speak of it, but his heart is heavy, and, try as he may to hide his feeling, the note of discouragement is heard by his more sensitive hearers. It may even be that in rare instances he himself has fallen unconsciously into an ethical or social type of preaching that misses the main issue, in that it seeks to get men to relate themselves to God's law without relating themselves to God, or to think of a brotherhood not based on a personal and filial relation to the

Father. Be the situation of either sort, the pastor is in need of help. If you and other earnest companions can go to him, not with an offer of criticism, but rather with an offer of aid, telling him that you will take up such work as he may prescribe, you are almost sure to infuse a new spirit into the service of the Church. I have seen times when the preacher seemed lonely,—not in companionship, but in effort. At such times the proffer of aid is an encouragement beyond measure. I urge the above program, my friends, because I recall distinctly how an unrebuking word of a good woman once made me feel that my sermons had a hard, ethical quality, and were not persuasive, and, also, how a young layman by the giving of a suggestion and the organization of a band of helpers brought a new spirit to a Sunday evening service. Some such work you may be able to do. It is much for a pastor to know that there are present ten, fifteen, twenty persons who share with him the responsibility of the hour and upon whom he can count to supplement his efforts in a wise and vigorous evangelism.

Thus far I have written to you about helping to create the atmosphere of the service and aiding to promote the purpose of the service under the pastor's direction. There is another way in which you can relate evangelism to preaching. We often hear of a preacher who draws; and do you know that there can well be a congregation that draws? By this I mean not simply the hospitality that welcomes the stranger but rather the willingness to go after the outsider that he may be brought under the spell of the Lord's house. To do this work requires sacrifice. Are you willing to pay the price? In his book entitled "Things of Northfield and Other Things," Dr. David Gregg tells of a layman in Park Street Church, Boston, who consecrated himself to work among young men. He had himself come to Boston as a youth and had experienced the deepest loneliness that a man ever knows,—the loneliness of a great city. His own memory made him thoughtful. Every Sunday three extra plates were laid on his dinner table and as many strange young men, recently come from village or country and now condemned to the

unsocial meals of an urban boarding-house, came within the circle of a consecrated hospitality. Is it any wonder that this man gathered a Bible class of more than one hundred young men? Is it any wonder that when he died a trainload of young men went out to Andover to help lay his body in God's Acre?

It may not be possible for you to work in this fashion. Still if you will plan to bring persons into the regular services, some of them will find their way to the altar of the Church and to the heart of Christ. Even so you will be an evangelist in relation to preaching. One of the needs of the day is a large company of the followers of Andrew,—that quiet disciple who made no public speeches but who is represented, in all Scriptural mention of him, as bringing to Christ the material upon which He might work. Given a few Andrews in every congregation, the Lord's Kingdom will move more rapidly to its consummation. It is a large thing to have even a small part in this infinite campaign.

Yours ever, E. H. H.

LETTER VII.

Evangelism and Individualism.

My Dear Young Friend:

Since it has been my privilege to plead frequently for private evangelism as distinguished from public evangelism, you have many times written me certain questions that indicated your desire to broaden your scheme of working. The preceding letter has hinted at some ways in which you can aid in public evangelism,—whether the campaign be one of special revival services or be expressed in the usual services of the Church. After reading again what I there said to you, you will not accuse me of decrying revivals. I shall, however, put heavier emphasis upon private evangelism simply because I feel that the opportunity of the Church, as offered in that form of service, has been and still is wofully neglected. My point is that you should do your

work with two hands. If I claim that it is a good thing to use the left hand as well as the right, you will not be foolish enough to charge that I am making an attack on the right hand. There is no virtue in being voluntarily and needlessly crippled! "Individualism," as I use it in this letter, means private evangelism, the effort to win the audience of one to a decision for Christ.

Study your Bible with me for a moment. We have already considered it as related to evangelism; but we have not studied its living examples of evangelism. The great public revival is there; read the story of Pentecost; find the reference to Antioch. If the Scriptures keep their place as a text-book on evangelism, the "special" revival will not be dropped from religious activities. But this is only half of the Biblical lesson. The method of individualism is the other half. With Jesus Himself the individual method was predominating. There were times when He left the vast crowd in order that He might have a conference with one person. This He did in the case of Zaccheus. If you will read through any

one of the Gospels with this point in mind, you will be struck by the way in which Jesus was constantly presenting the issue to one listener. Is it too much to say that many of us, who claim to be His followers, have not yet learned to follow Him in this respect?

The Acts of the Apostles give us the like lesson. There is a great revival; but after that there are "added unto the Church daily such as are in process of being saved." It is, later, Philip and the eunuch sitting together in the chariot, and the eunuch yields. The Epistles also enforce the point. Paul's method of founding Churches seems to have been a constant and personal working upon men individually. This matter could be urged by other precedents; but this general view secures the contention. Both public evangelism and private evangelism were used in apostolic times, and they seem to have been kept in a fine proportion. The crowd and the sanctified excitement in Jerusalem at Pentecost do not quarrel with the quiet and individual way in which Philip preaches in the desert.

The success that has attended the Church in

the last two hundred years in its almost exclusive use of public evangelism, in its marked "one-sidedness" of work, shows the power of the Gospel. No other business on earth would have survived if it had depended so largely on voluntary and public gatherings. Once I said to a wholesale merchant, "Suppose that your salesmen were sent into our various towns and cities to sell your goods; that they advertised in the papers in each place that at 10.30 A. M., on a certain day (one special day out of the seven being chosen), the goods of the firm would be presented and described by an expert; that all people interested would be 'heartily welcomed'; and that, if the feeling of those present seemed to warrant it, the goods would be offered for sale! How long would your firm last?" His immediate answer was: "We would go into bankruptcy next year." Now the above illustration may resemble a caricature; but I insist that it points a terrific moral for Church work. For two centuries we have been following the course described above, depending largely on the public presentation of our Gospel wares and too

often wholly omitting that "face to face" urging which is the very life of most business houses. It is little short of a miracle, my friend, that our Church is alive at all! If the Gospel, presented almost entirely by only one of the authorized and natural methods, has had wonderful victories, what would the results have been if the other method had likewise been faithfully employed?

The outcome, bear in mind, has not been a mere lack in results; it has been, in addition, a positive wearing out of the one method. We have played on one string of the instrument, and the consequence is that the lonely note has frequently become monotonous and has lost its appeal. We sometimes say that people are Gospel-hardened when they are only method-hardened. It is surprising to note how little impression public discourses make on the unconverted; it is more surprising to note how much impression individual, heart-to-heart conversation makes upon men. They may hear a sermon and be neither uncomfortable nor provoked; they are quite sure to be moved in some direction when they are ap-

proached in the right manner and by the right person in a private way. The message then can not be evaded nor transferred; it is not distributed among scores or hundreds; it is concentrated upon one. I plead that if we have a Gospel for the man in a public audience, we have the same Gospel for the same man when he faces us as a lonely hearer. This man has some right to question our genuineness and earnestness, if all our religious work is done in professional and conventional ways.

One of the largest values in individualism in evangelistic effort is seen in the fact that it enlarges the corps of workers. I have already insisted that the New Testament draws no distinction whatever between the ministry and the laity so far as the *duty* of evangelism is concerned. But how can laymen work? They do not preach, in the formal sense; only seldom do they have the chance to exhort; and practically never do they have an opportunity to put a public invitation. Still there is a pulpit which they can occupy,—the private pulpit which can be erected in any place. Have you ever stood in such a

pulpit, my friend? We need a promotion of lay-preaching,—not of that type which shows a pride of public speech and which leads its victim to take time in a prayer-meeting which belongs to better and more modest folk, but rather of that type which counts it both joy and duty to tell the good news where the telling does not spread abroad the teller's name.

Kipling has a poem not often referred to,—a poem without the dignity of his "Recessional," or the smooth force of the "L'Envoi" in "The Seven Seas," but a poem with an evangelistic lesson for our day. It is called "Mulholland's Contract." Mulholland was a worker on the cattle-boats,—a gambling, cursing, drinking fellow. One day the gale was on the sea and fear came on the cattle. They broke loose on the lower deck and became wild. Mulholland looked into the face of death. In his wild eagerness for life he made "a Contract with God:"

"An' by the terms of the Contract, as I have read the same,
If He got me to port alive, I would exalt His name,
An' praise His Holy Majesty till further orders came."

They picked Mulholland up senseless with a vast gash in his head. When he came to consciousness he saw "the shiny Scripture texts" on the walls of a Seamen's Hospital. These reminded him of his solemn promise:

"An' I spoke to God of our Contract, an' He says to my prayer:
'I never puts on my ministers no more than they can bear,
So back you go to the cattle boats an' preach my gospel there.

For human life is chancy at any kind of trade,
But most of all, as well as you know, when the steers are mad afraid,
So you go back to the cattle boats an' preach 'em as I have said.

They must quit drinkin' an' swearin', they must n't knife on a blow,
They must quit gamblin' their wages, and you must preach it so.
For now those boats are more like Hell than anything else I know.'

I did n't want to do it, for I knew what I should get,
An' I wanted to preach Religion, handsome an' out of the wet.
But the Word of the Lord were lain on me, an' I done what I was set.

. . . . . .

An' I sign for four pound ten a month and save the money clear,
An' I am in charge of the lower deck, and I never lose a steer;
An' I believe in Almighty God, an' I preach his gospel here."*

This is the voice of the every-day worker, crude and rasping, if you please, but sincere and penetrating. God grant that this voice may begin to sound in genuineness until factories and stores and fields and roadsides may become the places of the blessed Evangel!

Doubtless, since you admit the general duty of private evangelism, you will inquire about directions as to how to make it effective. You understand that in a booklet of letters many details of instruction can not be given; you understand, too, that no written lessons can prepare you for all the emergencies that may arise in your personal dealings. Besides, I would not want you to feel that the secret of individual evangelism can be gotten from any set of rules. The only secret is to will to do this work and to keep on doing it until you do it better. The

*The Seven Seas, p. 83.

secret of all Christian work is more clearly revealed in advancing experience. Every kind of preaching is an art, and an art must not only be learned, it must be practiced. I touched on this in the first letter that I sent you; I renew the emphasis now because I want you to see that he who walks toward skill must always follow the path of actual effort. This is true of public preaching; it is just as true of private preaching.

I would advise that letter-writing should have a place in your individual work. There are several differences between spoken and written address. A conversation often seems passing,—very much as if our words went out into the air and never found a stopping-place; but a letter has a kind of permanent quality. It is easier to file than is a conversation. Spoken address may be laughed away; but it is hard to joke about an evangelistic letter. Men's lips sometimes say what their pens would refuse to write. Besides, a brief note is often an excellent test and forerunner. The recipient feels that he must take some notice of it, and in meeting the law of courtesy he is almost bound to reveal himself some-

what. I am not writing to you a mere theory, I have written scores of evangelistic letters,—and with marked results. The Post-office is used for business correspondence, and for social correspondence. Why should it not be used to carry our personal Gospel? But, my friend, in Heaven's name be natural and unstilted in what you write; and in all ordinary cases be brief. Be very sure, also, that your letter is not used as a means of evading face-to-face work. Paul nearly always said that he longed to follow his epistles in person. We ought not to write a letter of invitation unless we are willing to go after it, if it seem fit and wise, to aid it in its work.

I would counsel, also, that you take heed lest your first approaches be too strong. Jesus is our example here. He fitted his approach to the person. He began by saying to Zaccheus, "To-day I must abide at thy house," whereas his opening word to Nicodemus was, "Except a man be born again, he can not see the Kingdom of God." The difference in these approaches is not explained by any varying mood on our Lord's part,

but rather by His seeking the appropriate word in the individual case. Nicodemus had come to the Lord, while the Lord had gone to Zaccheus. Evidently the former was more ready for deep dealing than was the latter. Since men seldom seek us out to ask the way to God, it is evident that our seeking of them should be considerate, and even adroit. Often it is better not to use the ordinary statements of truth and invitation. There is nothing divine about many of our phrasings. The cry that words like "sin" and "salvation," and commands like "Come to Jesus" and "Be saved by grace," should be banished from Christian speech is not warranted. We do not want an emasculated religious dictionary. Yet there are times when it is distinctly better not to use these strong terms. The Biblical saying about "milk for babes" has its suggestion for us here. Our vocabulary, like food, should be fitted to the receiving subject. Try your friend in an easy and incidental way. Drop some word about Christ or about heaven. A look into your friend's face may disclose whether he has any

spiritual receptiveness. But with all your caution keep a touch of adventure; and remember that if your word of peace can not abide in that man's house, your word "will return to you again." Goldsmith said in much the same fashion, "Good counsel, rejected, returns to enrich the giver's bosom." If your effort be sincere, your evangelism will save you more deeply.

Allow me to warn you, my young friend, that this individualism is not easy work. I have worked publicly and privately in evangelistic effort. The private way calls for the more grace and consecration, and it requires more boldness. Be quite sure that your life is measurably consistent ere you undertake the sacred task. Do you know that if every Methodist Episcopal pastor brought one person each month to Christ and his Church by this method of individualism, it would mean an annual increase of 168,000? And that, if each evangelical pastor in the Republic did the same, it would mean fully 1,500,000 souls each year? And what would be the effect if one in ten of our young lay-members should claim for the

Lord in this way one person every twelve months? That these suggestions point the way to the Church's power and hope is my earnest opinion; that the call to such work may now come to you is my equally earnest prayer.

Yours ever, E. H. H.

LETTER VIII.

Evangelism and Children.

My Dear Friend:

I write with much hesitancy in answer to your question about evangelistic work among children. It is, I think, the tenderest theme in the circle of Christian thought. Strangely enough, there is no general agreement on the subject. The Church has not yet fully found out what to do with the children. Our creeds, considered as logical expressions of faith, are evidently meant for adults. You would feel the impropriety of putting the Nicene or the Athanasian or the Westminster Creed into the hands of a little child. The Apostles' Creed is more workable, and its repeating is likely to prove of force in the spiritual development of childhood. Our worship in general is not planned for the children. Protestantism had been a system for

more than two and a half centuries before the Sunday-school pushed its way into the life of the Church. Nor do we have any fixed theory as to the relation of the normal child to Christ; we usually begin our discussion by attempting to show that a religious life is *possible* for him. Upon but one point have we come into union; we believe that all dead children are God's and that they go to His nearer presence. The old Calvinistic conception, presented in Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom," wherein the non-elect infants plead for mercy and are assigned to "the easiest room in hell," has passed,—and it will never return.

But as to the spiritual condition of living children we are by no means agreed. We have rendered a confident verdict upon those who pass to the care of God, and we are still debating about those who remain under our guidance. Practically is it not more important that we should have a working theory of the spiritual state of living children than it is that we should have a restful theory as to the state of dead children? What you seek to do with children in the

way of evangelism will depend upon what you think of the child's spiritual state. If the child is to be treated as belonging natively to Satan, to be claimed later for God, if possible, that means one type of work. If the child is to be treated as if he were negative, an unsown field, a soul without an owner, that means another type. But if the child is to be treated as belonging to God, until and unless he definitely chooses another Master, that means still another type. For myself, I pronounce definitely in favor of the third theory and its corresponding type of evangelism.

I am sure, my friend, that you will adopt this same theory if you study the Scriptures, and especially Christ's words about children. There can be no possible question as to the place held by the little people in the Hebrew Church. They were counted as the Lord's from the start of life, and the sign of the covenant was given to them. I know well that some will quote severe statements from the Old Testament. David's words concerning his own infanthood and nature are often brought forward. Still the drift of the Old

Testament teaching is not in the slightest doubt: Children were treated as God's children. Samuel's history shows no record of a break of experience; and his relation to Jehovah is fairly typical of Hebrew faith and practice.

And have you studied the New Testament and its references to children? Here we need to be fair and careful. Paul writes, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus, we say, our children all die in Adam. But, if you are going to have universalism at the disaster end of this text, why not have universalism at the benefit end? If Adam's death comes without volition, does Christ's life come without volition likewise? Paul's text needs freedom at both ends of its meaning. No word can be quoted from Paul, dealing unmistakably with children, that puts them away from a native relation to God and His grace. Children were to be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

And besides all this, Jesus settles the question for us. More than once He made the child the type of His Kingdom. Get a concordance

and find *His* references to childhood! If Christ meant by His teaching that some qualities and characteristics of children were, when seen in adults, the signs of the divine life, then his language is unclear and misleading. "Of such is the Kingdom of heaven." You know the other familiar texts. It is sufficient to say that our Savior, beyond all question, gave to childhood a place in the divine Kingdom.

Have you not thought of the meaning of infant baptism at this point? Some will say that the rite is not definitely prescribed for children in the New Testament. Yet it is difficult to think that the custom of ages in inducting children into the Church was abrogated without a word of explanation. The silence of the New Testament is an argument for or against infant baptism, according as one looks at the subject. Yet I am not arguing now for infant baptism, but rather for the thing it surely implies: the present relation of the child to the Lord and the certain place of the child in His Kingdom.

I know well that this position will suggest questions and difficulties. I would not have you put aside all theories of inheritance. That would be against both religion and science. Even if you wish to call the inheritance that comes to us from our ancestors "depravity," I will not object, though I like not the word as applied to childhood. Of one thing you may be sure: God has not made a one-sided law. Therefore, the good and the bad must both descend to us by heredity. But allowing the hereditary effect, how does the inheritance influence the child's relation to God? Whose child is he? Are we older people perfect? Are we free from inbred taint? And how does this affect our relation to the Kingdom? As for the child's questionable conduct, we can match it by the conduct of older people who profess the Lord's grace. The child gets angry! So does the Church trustee. The child is forgetful! So is our older listener. The child wants his way! So does that mature steward. The child is selfish! Well, that adult member grasps what he can get and keeps it quite success-

fully. Of course, it is unwise and untrue to idealize childhood too gloriously. Wordsworth says, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." Sometimes it does and sometimes it does not. Still I am inclined to believe that the normal child is as true to his conception of duty as is the average adult to his. It is not fair that we should try the child by a stricter standard than we apply to the older folk. Childhood has its essential immaturities. Let us allow for them. You, my friend, must often be glad to believe that God has yet several million years in which to work on you for your improvement.

What does your own childhood experience say about this? Do you recall how fully you believed in God? Do you remember how surprised you were when you discovered that certain people did not consent or profess to belong to Christ? Were not your prayers in the idiom of full trust? Did not the sympathy of your young heart turn toward God? My own experience in childhood confirms fully the Savior's words. If I have ever belonged to God, I belonged to Him then. For thousands of people with whom you

work, nothing better could be done than to bring them back to the love and faith of their childhood. Tom Hood writes:

"I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.

It was a childish ignorance,
But now 't is little joy
To know I 'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy."

This speaks of the tragedy of too many lives. If your evangelism can save children from this pathetic experience, you may well count yourself both happy and successful.

Let me commend to you, my young friend, Dr. John T. McFarland's pamphlet on "Preservation Versus the Rescue of the Child." That will make clear your evangelistic duty with reference to children much more forcefully than I have here presented the matter. You must not conclude that your task is made easier by the theory that the child belongs to God and by the natural inference that he is to be kept for the

Lord. This does not mean necessarily that the child is not to have an experience of awakening; nor does it mean that he need not consciously and directly choose the mastery of Christ for his life; and certainly it does not mean that the child is to be left to chance devices. Here is an illustration: It is no easier often to keep a child in the home than it is to call him back when he has gone forth. So to have him *stay* in the Kingdom requires a constancy that may not be demanded by an effort to have him *enter* the Kingdom again. To this end you should love the children to the point of sacrifice. You should know their names, find out their experiences, enter sympathetically into their small joys and sorrows, and, above all, make them feel that they are God's own and that they must keep true to Him. I say that this will mean serious and unceasing work; but you will find it the gladdest service in the list of Christian duties.

May I offer one special warning? Take heed lest you fasten a man's relation to the Kingdom upon a child! Have you read the story of the

Children's Crusade? Probably one hundred thousand little people away back yonder in the year 1212 marched down into Italy on their way to the Holy Land to fight for the recovery of the Savior's sepulchre. It is said that the way of travel was strewn with their bodies and that only about one-fifth of the wee soldiers ever returned to their homes! What folly it was! What led to this senseless campaign? Was it not the blunder of getting a child to take a man's relation to the supposed work of the Kingdom? We should not repeat the blunder in any form whatsoever. The religious life should keep children true to the sphere of childhood,—to their play and to their school. I once knew an eleven-year-old boy who talked in public meetings as if the religious interests of the town were crushing his small heart. This was bad; it was priggish; and it was followed directly by a fearful reaction. The great Apostle wrote, "When I was a child, I spake as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child." He might have added, "I was religious as a child." "Childish things"

ought not to be "put away" too soon. There is something radically wrong with any evangelism that robs children of their childhood.

We are, however, more apt to spiritualize the mistake of the Children's Crusade and to repeat it in deeper forms. How many little people have sought for an adult's religious experience? There are pilgrimages of the heart as well as of the body. It is a terrible thing to put a child where he thinks that he must *feign* a type of conversion. It is a terrible thing, too, to place a boy, who wants to be real, where he can not possibly find the feeling he seeks, and directly to send him forth with the fear that there is nothing in religion for him. Let us be cautious here. To expect a child to walk into the Kingdom along that path of agony and striving, whereon the obdurate and persistent sinner must come, is to look for the impossible, and so to subject the child either to disappointment or insincerity. When once you have made up your mind what is necessary, in order that children may remain in the Kingdom, follow your course in all con-

science. But I adjure you by the Savior of childhood that you touch with gentlest hands the plastic material of young life and that you work under *His* instructions and by *His* principles. And may you become a real evangelist to many children! Yours ever, E. H. H.

LETTER IX.

Evangelism and Men.

My Dear Friend:

You have written me as to the best ways of reaching men, and fully a score of other young people have sent like inquiries. I judge, therefore, that you have observed with anxiety that both the congregation and membership of the average Church show a minority of men. Usually the women number two to one; sometimes they are three to one. You feel keenly that this should not be so. The Gospel is not primarily for one sex, and you can not escape the conviction that we are in some way bungling its presentation if the heart of man is not reached equally with the heart of woman. The conspicuous leaders of the Church have been men,—all the New Testament writers, the Twelve Apostles, and the great theologians and preachers of the

centuries. Yet the followers of the Church have been mostly women. This is strange and anomalous.

You have heard various shallow explanations of this fact. The census does not explain it; for in Massachusetts women outnumber men less than three per cent; in Indiana men outnumber women more than 50,000; while in the new States men are in a large majority. The odd thought of a reformer that, as men preachers had drawn women audiences, so women preachers would draw men audiences, does not explain it; for the available figures do not show that women-pastors have brought men to the Churches. The remark of male conceit that men are more intellectual than women and so are slower to yield to the mysteries of faith, does not explain it; for college records do not warrant the claim of man's superiority. The charge that many preachers are impractical and strike a feminine note, does not explain it; for the most virile ministers do not always draw men to the pews.

Even when we go more deeply we are apt to

state the problem in terms of a superficial condition rather than in terms of a fundamental cause. It sounds more thorough-going, for example, to say that business life is dishonest and men feel that it can not be pursued consistently with Christian ideals; but are we preaching a Gospel that does not save souls in business? Or it may be said: Women live more in solitude, and the quiet life is more in harmony with faith; but are we preaching a whole and wholesome Gospel if it does not save amid the world's clamors? Or, yet again, it is said: Women are naturally more religious than men; but are we to admit that God has so made men as not to give them an equal chance through a proper evangel? In stating that women are naturally more religious than men, do we not mean that they respond more readily to the prevailing type of Gospel; and is not just this our problem? Jesus drew men to Himself. You know that it is often said that "woman was last at the cross and first at the grave;" yet a quick reading of any Gospel will show in Jesus' company a much larger list of men than of women. Why?

Well, my friend, the conditions in the Lord's time may have had some bearing. Owing to the oriental custom He had much freer access to the society of men than He had to the society of women. It was hard for the man of his day to understand how Jesus dared to talk to the woman at the well. In certain foreign countries the large majority of our early converts were men,—since women were hidden in the zenanas. But in our time and place conditions do not favor work among men. We allow boys to do things that girls are not allowed by public sentiment to do. Make a list of such things, and note how they lead away from Christ. It will take a long time to get society to protect our young men as it protects our young women. Some talk as if the double standard of morality were unjust to women; is it not really unfair to men? Does public sentiment protect them from whole ranges of temptation as it protects women? In addition to this, modern conditions provide that probably nine-tenths of so-called pastoral work is done among women. Calls are made at homes in the daytime, and the men are elsewhere.

Hence I do not speak irreverently when I say that some present conditions make it hard to bring Christ to men. We can defeat some of these conditions by lifting the standards for manly repute and others by insisting that religious work is as possible in an office as it is in a parlor. In bringing about these changes, my friend, you can have your part.

But then I conceive that Christ drew men to Himself in Galilee because they saw Christ as He was. Sometimes I fear that we have seen and presented only half of Him and that we have especially failed to see and present that other half that will appeal to men. We have talked of the Christ who wept over Jerusalem rather than of the Christ who whipped the thieves out of its Temple; of Him who said, "Neither do I condemn thee," rather than of Him who said, "Ye generation of vipers;" of Him who said, "Resist not evil," rather than of Him whose very presence made the policeman shun His arrest; of Him who prayed resignedly in the Garden rather than of Him whose face and word made

the crowd go "backward and fall to the ground." In general we have preached the passive virtues of Christ rather than his active heroisms and positive majesties. Now both of these sides of the Lord should be shown; but do you not see that you can so present Christ that He will appeal to women? Or so that He will appeal to men? Which Christ have we been presenting? I am sure that when we make Christ appear *"as He is,"* men will become like Him and will love Him; for it is in Him to win the sons of thunder as well as the daughters of peace.

You are correct in your statement that our problem is the young man. Occasionally we reach the older man; but the future of the Church depends upon its power to claim young manhood for Christ. So will you allow me to name several emphases that a Gospel for young men must make? I say again that this Gospel must be presented naturally. To the young man life is real, even if it be not earnest. He detects pose, and he calls it "canting hypocrisy." He is slow to think that a real religion will make an

unreal person. So, my friend, if you would win him, be frank as Christ was frank. Shun tricks and court directness.

Nor can you capture him with a gloomy Gospel. He is filled with the sense that life is good. He has just passed out of the period where his main business was play, and for a while yet he will carry that period's characteristic with him. He has not been sobered by defeats, sorrows, and funerals. He can not see religion as his grandmother sees it, though he is willing that she shall thumb her Bible for hours and sit with a far-away look in her eyes. But to him life is fair and rosy. Christ, therefore, must be so offered to him as to meet the sense of the present life's goodness. Here, again, we have not always preached a full Christ. We have said much more of Him who wept at Lazarus' grave than of Him who sat down at the feast by Lazarus' side; much more of the Man of Sorrows than of the Man who spoke often about "joy". Do you really believe that an ascetic Christ can reach the young man of our period and that we can get the thousands who love the music of laugh-

ter to follow "a Christ who never smiled?" Take heed, my friend, lest your manner and your speech give the impression that your faith makes for gloom.

The young man feels that life is full, as well as good. Hence a religion that merely empties and restrains will not conquer him. He is afraid of bristling negatives. He does not like bare deserts and vacant rooms; he will not answer an invitation that calls to prison and chains. They say that the Ten Commandments have never been set to music. Be that as it may, the world does not often sing a list of "Thou shalt nots." God always seeks to put the good in the place of the evil. Christ came not merely to destroy but to fulfill. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle." We have a Gospel which substitutes the good for the bad rather than a Gospel that makes gaps and vacancies. You should not, therefore, say more to the young man about what he must "give up" than you say about what he will take on. The emptiness made in his life by the prohibitions of religion should be filled at

once by its positive inspirations and duties. So, my friend, do not make the young man feel that our blessed faith is a vast "No," when it is truly an eternal "Yes" for the best that is in him.

Directly the young man comes to feel that life is large,—very large. We have much to say about the confidence of youth and of the lexicon that does not contain the word "fail." But I wonder if the people who talk thus really know the dictionary of the young man. He does fear failure. Whether he teaches his first school, attends his first patient, addresses his first jury, or deals with his first customer, his outer boldness hides an inner tremor. The largeness of life oppresses him. It is just here that the Christian evangelist has his opportunity. Personally, I have found young men peculiarly susceptible when they stand before life's opening work. They well know that the strength and wisdom of the great God are alone adequate for their help. My friend, watch for this peculiar mood in the life of the average young man and meet it with the offer of Christ's unfailing aid.

I think, too, that the young man has the

sense of life's conflict and that our appeal must be to his heroic quality. Truly he is not looking for softness. He prefers foot-ball above croquet. In deeper things his heroism comes out. Our armies were largely made up of young men who became the central heroes in the tragedy of the last century. Our faith will reach the young man more surely if it sounds an heroic note. We often say that life is a battle; yet I feel that we do not make real enough the spiritual conflict. An eminent teacher said recently that we need now "a moral equivalent for war." Our Lord offers just this; offers it so actually that His greatest follower called himself a "soldier of Jesus Christ." My friend, put this militant spirit into evangelistic appeal until many a young man shall feel that the failure to enlist under the banner of the Cross is the very shame of cowardice.

I feel the imperfection of what I have written here. At the same time I am confident that the above suggestions point to a more successful evangelism for manhood. And in that cause I would be Your Co-worker, E. H. H.

LETTER X.

Evangelism and Expression.

My Dear Young Friend:

Since I began this series of letters you have written me these questions: "Is the altar still the best method in public services to help penitents through to conversion? If not, what method would you suggest?" For several days your note has been lying on my table. I sent you a brief reply; but I wish now to supplement that brevity by a fuller consideration. I shall not use the word "method" as you used it in your question; for much that I have already addressed to you deals with the method of evangelism. So I prefer to use a more specific term. The word "expression" will perhaps do as well as any other. By it I shall mean the definite act whereby the seeker puts his purpose before men and commits himself to the new life.

At this point our education is sure to influence us,—perhaps unduly. If we have known but one manner of testing the earnestness of those who would begin to follow Christ, but one way in which their thought was to be concentrated and their seeking intensified, it will be hard for us to admit the value of any other way. Have you not noticed how little patience those who have known only the altar method show toward different forms? And have you not found that those who have been accustomed to other forms are often prone to raise issue with the mourners' bench?" The truth is that we are inclined to become narrow in our view of methods, even as we become narrow in our view of truth or experience. He who insists that there shall be uniformity of opinion and close resemblance of experiences is quite sure to insist on the value, if not indeed the validity, of but one expression.

It is very easy to ridicule any special method of committing men to the discipleship of Christ. Will kneeling against a certain piece of wood and on a particular carpet bring people nearer

to God? Will standing up for fifteen seconds before a specified company of people make one a Christian? Will lifting the hand in response to an appeal of a preacher raise the soul any farther toward the Lord? Will affixing the signature to a seeker's card insure the writing of one's name in the Lamb's Book of Life? Will going into the buzz of an inquiry room and listening to a few disconnected statements from some worker give one peace of heart and constancy of loving service? You see, do you not, how easy it is to heap scorn on any form of expression. The answer to all the above questions is both No and Yes. The answer is No, if any or all of the expressions be merely formal and have no connection either with deep desire or strong purpose. The answer is Yes, if any single one of these expressions is a sign of the heart's answer to God's call, a token of the will's surrender to Him.

For, bear in mind, that the New Testament may not be quoted in favor of any of these expressions. What did Jesus ask men to do when they resolved to follow Him? Did He ask any formal thing? What method did Paul use? And

on the day of Pentecost what were the three thousand seekers directed to do as a token of their inner conviction? The fact that you can not answer these questions at once, and the further fact that even upon turning to the Bible you are left in doubt, are significant. There is no Biblical method of expression; no "mourners' bench," no standing up, no hand-lifting, no card-signing. Every case seems to have been a little different from every other. But there is this likeness among all the cases: Each laid stress upon an inner choice and then used the expression that seemed most natural under the circumstances. The New Testament is clear and unmistakable in its demand for repentance, faith, and conversion; but there is no prescription of any of the usual expressions in our modern evangelism. In this respect, certainly, the Bible is a very broad Book.

Hence I suggest that we should be very careful not to raise an issue with any seeker concerning a particular form of committing himself. When we make even a slight thing an issue, we are apt to change it from a help into a hindrance.

If we put a man in a position where he foolishly declares that he will *not* go to an altar, for example, we have indirectly induced him to place the altar between himself and God. Now an altar is intended to be a medium of approach rather than a wall of separation. We should take heed lest in some cases we make it the latter. This same word might be said concerning all other forms of expression. They are means and not ends. If we can use them to help men to Christ, they are aids; but if we so rate them as to deter men, they become obstacles. Therefore, my advice is this: Never make a man feel that there is but one path into the Kingdom. Undoubtedly the altar has been a benefit to many seekers. It has made for decisive action; it has given the mind time for consideration; it has given the heart opportunity for fixing its surrender and steadying its purpose. Yet millions of people have found their way to Christ along other paths. The City of God has open gates on every side; and the Lord waits to welcome all who truly come by any entrance whatsoever.

This hints, my friend, that experience will show good results from all expressions. It is an inner matter, after all. If a man lifts his hand and means more than the man who stands to his feet, then this first man comes nearer the goal. One of the best laymen I ever knew stood in an office with Thomas a Kempis's *"Imitation of Christ"* in his hand and told a pastor that he would like to profess Christ by joining the Church. Still another pledged himself to me for Christ when we were driving one Saturday afternoon. And yet another on Sunday morning stepped unexpectedly to the front while the last hymn was being sung and said to his pastor: "Please put my name on the Church record, and give me something to do,—quick." I have seen scores of people commit themselves to Christ at the communion table. Why not ask your friends to pledge themselves in this way? I sometimes think that it tends to bring them very near the Cross. But, above all, let us rid ourselves of the idea that any method is divine. Anything that expresses and confirms the will toward God and

His righteousness is acceptable; anything that brings the heart into sympathy with Christ amounts to a sacrament.

I can not close this letter without insisting strongly that the final and effective expression is a hearty connection of one's self with the visible Church of Christ. It is not hard to ridicule this expression also; and men are eager to say that joining the Church will not save souls. This is true. Yet I have known many to slip away from an earnest allegiance because they did not join the Church; and very seldom have I known any one to continue in religious interest or work without taking a definite relation to Christ's Church. Presuming that a man genuinely gives himself to the Master, his natural place is in the membership of that organization which has carried the Gospel over the mountains and seas and which alone has preserved the earnest evangelism of the centuries. In its fellowship I am glad to count myself

Your Brother, E. H. H.

LETTER XI.

Evangelism and Love.

My Dear Friend:

When you wrote me your confession, saying that sometimes you came for a season under the evangelistic impulse but that the passion for the work did not long abide, I thought that I would say something to you about evangelism and habit. Assuredly I did not feel that the mere repetition of an invitation would make you an evangelist; nor yet did I feel that the constant doing of a good thing would make you skillful without regard to the motive that prompted the doing. But I did feel that I was in danger of urging something quite mechanical if I related steadfastness in evangelism to mere habit. Hence I would now go back of habit to the spirit that alone can save it from becoming a dreary repeating of the same action and can transform it

instead into a fresh and vital constancy. I am certain that there is only one thing that can keep you from occasionalism in your evangelistic work; that is Love.

I am aware that this word is frequently degraded; that it is used to designate a passing sentiment; that, worse than this, it is sometimes substituted for the name of a coarse feeling; and that it is difficult for us to keep the term up to its own high meaning as given in Paul's matchless Chapter (1 Cor. xiii). Still we must all be glad that the Revised Version is recovering the word to its Christian sense and will soon or late make it stand for "The Greatest Thing in the World,"—aye, for more than that, for the Greatest Thing in God. The inspiration of evangelism is love. All else will grow weary and falter. A nominal place in the Church may keep us for a time in the spirit of invitation; a quickened conscience, stirred by an appeal to consistency, may keep us busy for a week or a month; but the secret of habitual evangelism is found in the love that never faileth.

Do you not see, my friend, that this is what

brings God in his ceaseless approaches to the hearts of men? It is not irreverent to say that God is the One Constant Evangelist. He is forevermore telling his own good news, the Gospel of his own heart. The Bible is the record of God's evangelism; and the current history of the Church, if we could read it aright, is the like record. Sometimes we have tried to magnify the human preaching of the Gospel by saying that the Lord has committed the work to men; we should rather say that He has called men to cooperate with Him. No man ever evangelizes alone; nor is any man the pioneer in moving upon any individual soul. God is always in advance of our comings.

This was what William Butler had in mind when he said to his first missionaries in India, as he started them out to batter down the black walls of heathenism: "Remember that wherever you go the Holy Spirit has preceded you." The Evangelist who reveals Christ had gone on ahead of every other messenger. Why does the Spirit go thus? There is a phrase in one of Paul's letters which I have never heard any one comment

upon, but which leads into infinite tenderness, "the love of the Spirit." (Rom. xv, 30). Does it mean the love of the Spirit toward men? If so, what deep love it suggests! For have you not noticed that Jesus, in naming the offices of the Holy Spirit, always represents Him as moving upon the inner life of man? He convicts of sin; He stirs memory; He shows the future of the soul; He teaches truth; and He reveals Christ. The Infinite Spirit alone knows the worth of the finite spirit; and this is the reason of His perpetual approaches to every life.

Until we have that "love of the Spirit," we can not fall into the evangelistic habit. That love looks two ways. It looks toward Christ. Love for Him must ever make us feel that He is not satisfied until He sees of the travail of His soul. There is real pathos in His prayer, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am." There is longing here,—a mysterious longing. Christ wants His own with Him; and He wants us to bring His own into His company. There is a divine side of yearning of which we do not think sufficiently and

which we can not fully measure. The Good Shepherd will be restless until the last sheep is brought in from the mountains, and then will He say, "Rejoice with Me." It is the recognition of this love; yes, the love for this love, that will make you, my friend, an evangelist.

But the love of the Spirit looks manward also. He loves us; therefore we must love men. The new rendering is meaningful: "We love because He first loved us." (1 John iv, 19). The appreciation of a soul is an insistent call to evangelism. The Spirit woos men because He sees their everlasting worth. We must many times rebuke ourselves for our light estimate of deathless beings. I suppose that the revelation of a spirit must be tempered for us. Were it not so, we could not endure our responsibility. And yet we need to awake ourselves to a human appreciation, to be obedient to those glimpses that the Spirit gives into the heart of man. That little child is to live forever; that rough man that you passed on the street only this morning is made in God's image; every person in yonder vast crowd is destined to everlastingness. Un-

less we go to the Spirit for power to see this, we shall fail of evangelistic love as it looks manward. This is what our fathers meant when they prayed for "a burden of souls." This is what we must have if we are to lead the evangelistic life.

This brings us straight to prayer. Pray, my friend, for a revelation of Christ, and pray for a revelation of men. He who gives the revelations will give strength likewise to do the implied work. Under the love that is toward Christ and the love that is toward men, we shall feel that we are priests, mediating between souls and their Lord. Into that priesthood I summon you in the name of Christ. Yours ever, E. H. H.

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